

NEWS RELEASE

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Springfield Restaurant Owners Indicted

Charged with Harboring and Employing Illegal Aliens, Money Laundering

Springfield, IL - Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, announced that the owners of Buffet City restaurant, 1774 Wabash Avenue, Springfield, Illinois, were charged by a federal grand jury today with harboring and employing illegal aliens and money laundering. The ten-count indictment charges Xiang Hui Ye, age 28, of 3304 Haviland Drive, and Xian Xi Ye, age 39, of 2709 Kipling Drive, Springfield, Illinois with one count each of harboring illegal aliens, employing illegal aliens and eight counts of money laundering.

Both defendants were charged in a criminal complaint filed September 20, 2006. Hui Ye, a Chinese citizen who was granted asylum in the U.S., was arrested on September 20. Xi Ye, an illegal alien, was arrested on September 28, 2006. Both remain temporarily detained pending hearings scheduled on October 10, 2006, before U.S. Magistrate Judge Byron G. Cudmore.

The indictment alleges that from January 2005 through September 20, 2006, the two men provided housing, employment and transportation to illegal aliens for commercial advantage and financial gain, and that they knowingly hired and recruited illegal aliens to work at the Buffet City restaurant. The money laundering charges allege that one or the other of the defendants signed checks to pay for apartment rental used to house illegal aliens.

If convicted, the statutory penalty for the felony offense of harboring illegal aliens is up to 10 years in prison for each alien. For the misdemeanor offense of hiring or recruiting illegal aliens for employment, the penalty is up to six months in prison and a fine of \$3,000 for each illegal alien. For each charge of money laundering, the penalty is up to 20 years in prison.

The charges are the result of a criminal worksite investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement with assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Patrick J. Chesley in the Springfield Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is merely an accusation; the defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

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